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23 November 1953

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SHAM/OBOPUS
Newspaper Article re King Zog

Attached is an article from the French newspaper Sotir
re King Zog and his activities in Egypt.

1 Enclosure: As stated above.

Prepared by:

21 November 1953

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23 November 1953
3~~SECRET~~FRANCE - SOIR

Pursued by the Egyptian Treasury

THE FORMER KING OF ALBANIA ZOG HAD TRANSFORMED HIS COURT IN A
CLANDESTINE COMMERCIAL SOCIETYHis diplomatic bags transported in the whole world jewelry,
foie gras, and dresses.

By our envoyee Pierre Solan

Cairo,octobre by cable

King Zog of Albania, Queen Geraldine his wife, some of
their chamberlains and a mouthful of egyptian traders will soon
have to face the egyptian courts of justice in Cairo.

The Treasury reproached to them of having formed a clandestine commercial society. Under the cover of the diplomatic immunity generally accorded by former King Farouk for more than six years, the Zog and Co. Firm have imported and exported merchandise realising large benefits.

Three years imprisonment, 10.000 egyptian pounds of fine
a triple taxation of the profits: are claimed by the Investigating
Commission for this not common fraude.

Facts are undiscoverable. The egyptian police have perquisitioned the house of the former albanian sovereigns and has set hands on all the correspondence and comptability relative to the commercial operations of the former King. In this can be seen the albanian chamberlains transformed according to the occasion in travelling agents, collectors and even deliverers. Zog had a diplomatic bag with Europe and the States almost every week. A dozen courtsmen were constantly moving either by plane or boat to escort the heavy loads sealed with red wax, and brand with the initials of the King.

They contained especially precious clothing materials, jewelries, diamonds and artistic objects. Sometimes there were bottles of champagne, foie gras or truffles. The suspicious treasury believes that some loads were only filled with banknotes because Zog had rosen counterband to a state institution.

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Zog, Geraldine and small prince Leka born some weeks ago had had to flee their capital, Tirana, in front of the Italian invasion on the 7 April 1939. King Zog, in these circumstances showed proofs of an astonishing cold bloodness. He forgot no essential mean, not even the state gold treasury which he saved by taking away in his luggage.

At the end of June 1940, Zog left invaded France and embarked in Saint Jean de Luz on the british steamship Elik, and arrived in Great Britain where he lived for 6 years. Once the war was over in February 1946 he left for Port Said and when he landed watched himself the settling of his luggage, his treasure was always there.

On the order of Farouk, all the custom formalities were spared to the former sovereign of Albania. The egyptian royal family came herself from an albanian ancestor settled in Macedonia. Zog was the only moslem sovereign of Europe, which meant for him on islamic land, double favours.

Soon after, thanks to the smiling attitude of Geraldine soon their Albanian Majesties were seen in the rich families of Cairo and Alexandria. Then the friendship relations gave place to commercial ones. Zog had a large family to feed: sisters, nephews, and a battalion of faithful servants of the monarchy which had gathered from the four parts of the world. The albanian treasury was untouched, and closed in solid trunks to avoid any alteration of the metal constituted only by gold pieces. The King decided to make them fructify.

A good administrator

At the beginning the albanian diplomatic courriers were only charged of taking a bag of gold towards Europe or the States and change them against dollars or swiss francs sold at a high cost in Egypt, and which brought an appreciable benefit. Then as trade increased, Zog decided to increase his business. Thanks to him the best swiss watches could be sold in the Middle East at wonderful prices.

From watches the firm naturally passed to jewelry, diamonds and precious materials, and sometimes to drugs and even food. Excellent administrator, assisted by his wife Geraldine, well counselled by his ministers who had no portfolio to direct, Zog saw his fortune increase tremendously.

The King did not make crazy expenses. He took only a yearly payment of 60.000 pounds leaving satisfied his family and servants with incomes going from 2000 to 6000 pounds.

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The fall of Farouk did not trouble the former monarch nor his operations. However Zog understood that it was about time to look for some new asylum. In July 1953 he decided to transfer his family to the States and announced his departure. Some weeks later, an egyptian newspaper announced the opening of an enquiry on the suspicious activities of the "noble foreign refugees". The enquiry revealed enough surprising facts to bring the egyptian government on the 27 August to denounce the recognition of the royal albanian government and withdraw all the diplomatic privileges to Zog and his court.

King Zog decided to precipitate his departure. He booked reservations on the Marechal Joffre and had to embark on the 16 October.

Fifteen days sooner, at dawn, the villa of the King was surrounded by the gyptian police and a thorough perquisition delivered to the investigating commision all the material and the correspondence of the Zog firm. The bank accounts of Zog and Geraldine, of the princesses and the members of the Court were blocked.

Before leaving Egypt, former King of Albania will have to account to the egyptian justice for the procedure he has used to keep and increase the albanian treasury.

Pierre Solan

Picture:

From right to left: King Zog, Queen Gerladine (born countess Apponyi, daughter in law of the late colonel Girault) and prince Leka, actually aged 13.

'OURSUÏ PAR LE FISC ÉGYPTE

L'ex-roi d'Albanie Zog avait transformé sa cour en société commerciale clandestine

es valises diplomatiques transportaient dans le monde entier des bijoux, des foies gras et des robes

(De notre envoyé spécial Pierre SOLAN.)

LE CAIRE, ... octobre (par câble).

E roi Zog d'Albanie, la reine Géraldine son épouse, quelques-uns de leurs chambellans et une brochette de commerçants égyptiens comparaîtront bientôt devant le tribunal de première instance du Caire.

e fisc leur reproche d'avoir né une société commerciale destinée. Sous le couvert de munité diplomatique généralement accordée par l'ex-roi ouk à l'ex-roi Zog pendant six ans, la firme Zog Co importa et exporta des chandises, réalisant de très bénéfices.

rois ans de prison, 10.000 livres pendre, une triple taxation des ite non déclarés : c'est ce que ame le Parquet pour cette de peu banale.

es faits sont indiscutables. La ce égyptienne, perquisition au domicile des ex-souverains nais, a mis la main sur toute comptabilité et la corresponce relative aux opérations commerciales du roi. On y voit chambellans albanais transformés les besoins de la firme commis - voyageurs, démar-

urs, encasseurs et même li- urs. Zog avait une valise diplo- ique avec l'Europe et l'Améri- presque chaque semaine. Une ine de courtisans étaient cons- ment en route par avion et au pour escorter de lourds revêtus de cachets de cire ge, estampillés au chiffre du

contenaient surtout des tissus leux, des robes de prix, des bi- , des diamants, des objets de ctions. Quelques fois, on y trou- des caisses de champagne, des isons de foies gras ou de truffe. Le fisc égyptien soupçonneux e même que certains colis ient remplis que de billes de s et de billets de banque. Zog le avaient élevé la contrebande ieuve d'une institution d'Etat. Géraldine et le petit prince ne quelques semaines aupar- ient, avaient dû fuir de leur capi-

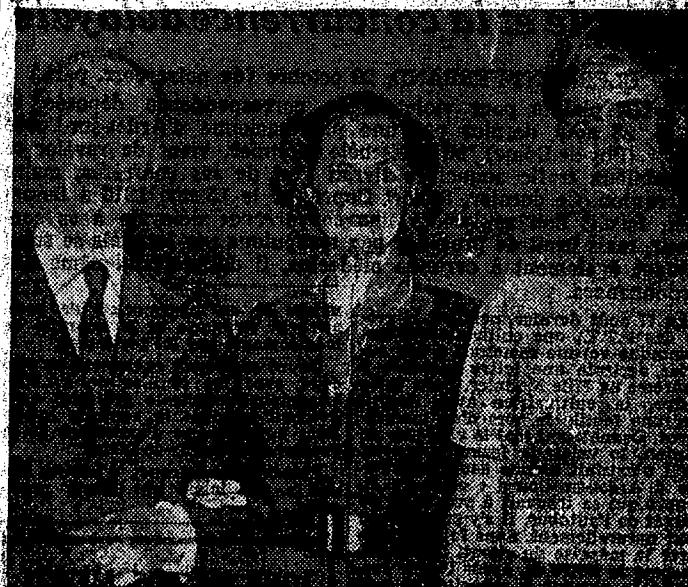
Tirana, devant l'invasion ita- e, le 7 avril 1939. Le roi Zog fit ve, en ces circonstances, d'un froid étonnant. Il n'oublia rien entiel, pas même le trésor en or Etat albanais qu'il sauva en l'em- dans ses bagages.

juin 1940, Zog quitta la France ile. Il s'embarqua à Saint-Jean- iz sur le paquebot anglais k, et arriva en Grande-Bretagne où il demeura près de six ans. uerre terminée, en février 1946, barqua à Port-Saïd. Il surveilla

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FRANCE-SOIR

Le roi Zog d'Albanie photographié récemment au Caire avec sa famille



De gauche à droite : le roi Zog, la reine Géraldine (née comtesse Apponyi) et belle-fille de feu le colonel Girault) et le prince héritier Leka, âgé aujourd'hui de 13 ans.

étrangers. L'enquête révèle suffisamment de faits surprenants pour amener le gouvernement égyptien le 27 août 1958 à dénoncer la responsabilité du gouvernement royal d'Albanie et à retirer tous les priviléges diplomatiques au roi, à sa famille, aux membres de sa cour.

Le roi Zog décida de précipiter son départ. Il retint des places sur le paquebot « Maréchal Joffre » et il devait s'embarquer le 16 octobre pour Marseille.

Quinze jours plus tard, à l'aube, la villa du roi fut cernée par la police et une perquisition en règle livrée au parquet toute la comptabilité et toute la correspondance de la firme Zog and Co. Les comptes en banque du roi, de la reine Géraldine, des prin-

cipaux membres de la cour furent bloqués.

Avant de quitter l'Egypte, l'ancien roi d'Albanie devra rendre compte à la justice des procédés qu'il employa pour conserver et augmenter le trésor albanais.

Pierre SOLAN.

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